821 what they mean by maboya). That is why they say laf'koua noquam th
the eating of the moon; laf'koua vicou the eating of the sun. When
821 one or the other[1] occurs, the women and young people dance all night,
535 and once they have started to dance they dare not quit before day.
They do not sing at all during this dance, but from time to time
utter doleful cries. During this gloomy silence, there is a girl or
woman who rattles little pebbles in a gourd and sings alone. The only
reason they have for this sad dance is that their food in the ground
would die without it.

In their dances, those just mentioned as well as others of re-
joicing, they do not hold each other with their hands, but each dances
alone. They put their feet together and jump, a little bent over,
putting one hand on their head, and the other on a buttock, and change
them constantly. This dance tires them so, that finally they are
completely exhausted.

785 Among their superstitions they have none more rigorous than their
fasts, and as they fast for several reasons and at different times, we
shall speak of each in its place.

● 305 Let us say here what would not be more appropriate elsewhere.
They calculate their year by the course of the Pleiades, which they
[821] call siric. They know several stars and know approximately when
802 they will have rain or wind. They count no higher than five; if they
have to say ten, they say: all my fingers. If twenty, they show
their feet and their hands, and they would not know how to say any
more.

CHAPTER IV

Their Ornaments

241 Our Caribs never wear clothes, neither men nor women, except
for a few chiefs when they come among us. They do not even cover
their shameful parts. This is contrary, nevertheless, to the custom
of the savages of the mainland, [34] where both men and women
have a sort of cotton band covering what nature is ashamed to show.

382 Men and women wear their hair long; at the front they cut it half-
way up the forehead and let it hang in the style of a little girl.

1 [i.e. An eclipse of the moon or sun.--Analyst]

arrow and now and then he suffered from the old wound. It was favorably treated by this remedy. When the Caribs have a swelling on the arm they incise it with an agouti tooth and make it bleed. Then they take a big papaya and when it is half cooked in the ashes they apply it hot against the swelling to draw off the inflammation. [141]

The Caribs do not understand what happens when there is an eclipse and they say that the maboya has eaten the moon. They dance all the night and dare not stop once they have started. [370] They do not know the line of the equinox, but know very well when the sun passes and repasses its zenith, that is to say, straight above their head. [210] They have no clocks nor any knowledge of hours, and when we say "What time is it?" they say "Where is the sun?" If it is nine o'clock they say "The sun is quite high." If it is afternoon they say "The sun turns." At four o'clock they say "It is not yet too late." [263] The Caribs have terms for "full moon," "zenith of the moon," "no more moon," "end of the moon," and "eclipsed moon" [163, 370], and "first day of the moon." [374] They count years by the passing of the Pleiades for they say, "How many Pleiades does your son have?" which means how old is he. [163] When the Caribs see some comet they say that it is a sign or warning for them. [88] [They know some planets, cf. 358, 431, 473; and some constellations, cf. 65, 163, 165, 186, 192, 194, 265, 289, 406, 421.--Editor]

The Caribs count up to five and no further. To express ten they say "all the fingers." If there is less they bend their fingers accordingly. If they wish to count up to twenty they open their fingers and then indicate their toes and say "fingers and toes." If they wish to count even more they say as many as hairs on the head or grains of sand on the seashore. [78] They have the names for only four colors: yellow, red, white, and black. [230]

The Caribs willingly brought me letters coming from Guadeloupe because they believed that these letters talked with me, and that I had a god as do their boyes who advised me about everything in these letters. This is because they did not yet grasp the meaning of our writing. [300]

done them. They swim like fish. In war it does not matter if their canoe capsizes for they know how to right it very easily and get inside it again. They always carry their hammocks with them.

7. Lore and Learning

The Caribs do not count higher than ten, and they demonstrate it by their fingers. Sometimes they count to twenty, or twice ten, showing both fingers and toes. To express a greater number they pick up some sand and throw it, and they say, "as many as flies," or "very many," or "as much as this." They count months by moons and count days by nights, for they say, "I will be there for so many nights," or "I will return after so many nights." They also express with their hands and arms how they consider and measure the goodness of nations. They point to their entire hand and a part of their arm and say to us that France is as good as this. For the Flemish or Dutch they show the hand and say "as good as this." The English are the worst in their estimation, and they only indicate them by showing the tips of their fingers. It is possible that when they speak of the French in their absence, or before men of other nations, they do not maintain the same division. They use little tobacco and like to mock the Europeans who come so far to these islands seeking this miserable weed.

They have their own particular language, which I believe is very hard to learn. Besides this they have a jargon mixed with French, Spanish, English, and Flemish. The trade they have had with those nations has caused the Caribs to learn some of the words of these languages, so that in a short time one is able to understand and be understood by them. This will be a great advantage for their instruction.

584 —the female first cousin descending from the female line does belong
to them—they ask her father for her; for they seldom marry against
582 the will of their parents. They have no degree of consanguinity for-
bidden among them, and it has happened that fathers marry their own
daughters from whom they have children, and mothers marry their
sons, although this is a very rare thing. It is quite common to see a
[595] case where two sisters have married the same man, and sometimes a
584 man marries a mother and her daughter. If a girl marries a captain
or the son of a captain she is led to her husband by her father and her
mother, and she carries her husband's dinner to him. The two of them
eat it together, sitting on the ground in the center of the house with-
out any other celebration, except perhaps for a little drinking party,
that is to say a little debauchery between the parents, although this
591 is quite rare. The woman then lives with her husband. When a man
who is not a captain marries a girl, he goes from his own place of
residence as we have said, and lives in the house of his father-in-law.
606 In this situation the women have the advantage over their husbands,
for they may speak to all kinds of people while the husband does not
dare to speak to the parents of his wife, unless this restriction is
dispensed with either by their age or by their drunkeness. They avoid
meeting each other by making devious paths. If they are surprised
in a place where they cannot take back what they have said, the one
spoken to turns his head to one side in order to avoid looking at the
man who speaks, if he must hear him. This strange custom was re-
ported to me by a young man who had been a slave among them for
581 a long time. Husbands and wives change their names when they are
married.

595 Polygamy is common among them and almost all of them have
several wives and sometimes even six or seven. They even have
wives in different islands where they are accustomed to go. It is
chiefly the captain who boasts of having a large family in order to
gain more credit among his people and to render himself more for-
midable to his enemies. A Carib who has several wives builds a
small house for each of them. The husband visits them there so that
[605] for one month—they count by moons—he lives with one wife, and
another month with another. Concerning this point it appears that
there is no kind of jealousy among them. Women of Europe, call
it a miracle if you wish!

5: Rouse E-4 (no date) 1948 ST13 Callinago ST13 (1650-1700)

MYTHOLOGY

776 821 Upon questioning by the missionaries, the *Carib* stated their belief in an unnamed superior power who lived in heaven and was endowed with all goodness. They regarded the earth as an indulgent mother, who furnished them with the things necessary for life.

The sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies were supposed to be human. The sun (noum) was considered a male; as ruler of the stars he prevented their shining during the daytime. He also warmed the stars, and they were believed to become ill during eclipses of the sun when the warming was not possible. The moon (houiou) was female; at first she shone during the daytime, but the coming of the sun filled her with shame and thereafter she appeared only at night. A star named Achinoin was said to be the cause of light rain and strong winds; another star, called Couroumon, controlled the tides and caused the heavy waves which upset canoes. To a *Carib*, Savacou, who became a bird and later a star, was attributed control over the thunder and strong winds. Other stars, the rainbow, and a comet were given similar mythological backgrounds. The first waters in the world were said to be the perspiration and urine of these spirits; the waters became fresh only when the salinity was strained out of them by the ground. Later the stars caused a great flood because the *Carib* failed to worship them.

776 The *Carib* believed that their ancestors had emerged from the navel (or the nostrils and an incision in the thigh) of a man named Louque, who had descended from heaven, bringing manioc roots and showing the people how to cultivate them and to prepare food. He also explained how to build houses, and according to one version he was the creator of the earth and of fish, which he made out of fragments of manioc bread. Three days after his death Louque was said to have returned to the sky.

LORE AND LEARNING

[832 845 The *Carib* recognized only four colors—white, black, yellow, and red. They counted up to 20 on their fingers and toes. As already described, 865 they had several methods of recording the time until a rendezvous. Their chiefs, shamans, and old men kept track of the time, counting the months by the moons, the seasons by the passing of the sun over the zenith, and the years by the rise and fall of the Pleiades. They also predicted the [coming of winds and rains by the ascension of certain constellations which, as described above, were believed to control the weather.

773 The people stated that they originally came from the mainland to conquer the *Arawak* whom they found living in the Lesser Antilles. They were fond of recounting deeds of bravery in warfare but otherwise do not seem to have had any interest in their past history.

If fish forms such a large part of the diet of the Caribs, it is because boating and fishing have always been a favorite occupation for them. The canoes which they still use today are hollowed out from the trunks of large trees, particularly the gum-tree, the giant of the forest. The word canoe is, moreover, like the word hammock, a word of Carib origin, imported into Europe by the Spanish. These boats are today used only for fishing, but formerly the Caribs—who are excellent seamen and even have, according to certain writers, some notion of the stars and know how to calculate time and the seasons—ventured quite far out to sea and went easily from one island to another. They were, besides, admirable swimmers, righting their canoes when they capsized, while the women kept afloat in the water, carrying their children at their breasts.

Their weapons for hunting and war were formerly bows and arrows, with tips carved from fish bones or tortoise-shell and often poisoned with the juice of certain plants. Of an unequalled skill from childhood in handling bows and arrows, the Caribs quickly became as adept at using guns when they were given them. The club, called bouton or boutou was also a powerful weapon in their hands. It was often carved and the hatchings were painted in various colors. As for the war hatchets of polished stone, found in the excavations on Dominica /140/ and other islands, they seem rather to have belonged to the Tainos than to the Carib (1). These hatchets bear a great resemblance to those found in the Guianas and in northern Brazil; there is a fine collection of them in the Museum of Roseau.

1. Beuchat (H.) Manuel d'archeologie americaine /Manual of American Archeology/. Paris, 1912.

The arts seem to have been very little developed among the Caribs of the Antilles, but some crude drawings or petroglyphs found on the rocks in the islands which they inhabited have been attributed to them, particularly in the vicinity of the town of Trois Rivieres, in Guadeloupe, and in the island of St. John.

Of naturally cleanly habits the Caribs bathed every day in the sea or in the rivers before staining their bodies with roucou. They have retained the habit of taking frequent baths and this hygienic care has protected them from a great number of illnesses; yaws, which is very common among the blacks of the Antilles, is rare in the Carib population.